

2011, October 21-22 NLS Mid-Year Meeting

Denver, Colorado

Friday, October 21, 2011

The NLS mid-year meeting began at 1:00PM on Friday, 21 October 2011, with devotions and communion led by Pastor Doug in a conference room at the Doubletree Hotel – Denver North. Present were Ed Broestl, Carolyn Hawkins, Steve Barnett, Steve Gielda, Magdala Ray, Pastor Doug Givan, and Nancy Peterson. Our devotional thoughts began with reflection on what is life-giving to each of us, and the responses often included some aspect of our relationships with our loved ones, our church family, and our 4th Day communities. Pastor Doug pointed out to us that Jesus, the Life-giving One, sought out people and established relationships with them, and this is the model we seek to emulate.

Magdala led the next activity, an exploration of the application of learning styles to strengthening relationships within the NLS and to understanding the importance and effectiveness of the Via de Cristo method.

The board members then reviewed and discussed the objectives and agenda of the mid-year meeting, prioritizing several key concerns: defining the roles of appointed board members; the focus and purpose of all board members; continuity from one year's board to the next; communication among the board members and with the local secretariats; and the best way for NLS to support the local secretariats through policy, guidelines, and practical application.

Ed asked the members of the board to provide a brief summary of their activities since the NLSAM in Charlotte, NC, July 2011:

VP – Outreach: Steve G. reported that the Wellness Checklist worked well in gathering important data and information from the local secretariats. The effort to recruit and train regional coordinators has experienced some delays. The 4th Day Leadership Survey, an assessment of how well the Via de Cristo method develops Christian leaders, was originally created in 2005 and received 62 responses from members of the Catholic Cursillo, Emmaus and Via de Cristo communities. At the last 4th Day conference, Steve G. provided it to those who were interested. He would like to see it launched as a survey in all our local secretariats, possibly online. He suggested that the EB consider meeting face-to-face more often throughout the year. One possibility for an additional meeting this coming year would be to combine a meeting with the 4th Day conference held in Winter Park, Florida, at the end of January or beginning of February.

He also reported that he has received inquiries with interest in starting new local secretariats in places such as New Jersey, Virginia Beach, Central Illinois and Manitoba (Canada), an exciting prospect which really requires that he shift his focus from problem-solver to proactive outreach –

a vision maker. He stated that the NLS can help the community grow by strengthening local secretariats and their connections to NLS through relationship-building.

VP – Administration: Carolyn’s activities since the NLSAM have included serving on the selection committee for the Executive Director position, coordinating the wrap-up process with the 2011 NLSAM Host Committee, assembling and reporting the 2011 NLSAM evaluations, and working with the 2012 NLSAM Host Committee in Denver. She will be revising the Host Committee document before the next annual meeting in July 2012.

Spiritual Director: Pr. Doug has been keeping the NLS board and the entire Via de Cristo community in prayer and spearheading the SD task force on encouraging pastoral involvement in the movement. One of the goals is to increase communication and one-to-one contact with bishops in each of the local secretariat areas; the participation of ordained Lutheran ministers as candidates and then transitioning to SDs serving on weekends is critical to the Via de Cristo method. He re-emphasized Pr. Ed Simonsen’s point that both clergy and laity must purposefully invite pastors into reunion groups, ultreyas, and other community activities. Pr. Doug expressed gratitude to Pr. Gerry Olsen of Gold Coast Via de Cristo in Florida for his assistance in creating the SD blog on the NLS website.

Pr. Doug is also working with John Bradford to print a small devotional booklet (Pilgrim Guide size) for the SDs serving in Via de Cristo around the country. He asked for the board’s help in reading and using the compiled devotions and will be sending it to the entire board, possibly one devotion per day; the board will then provide comments and suggestions to him.

Pr. Doug discussed with the board the possibility of creating online training for leadership. Steve G. mentioned that John Aclin of Rainbow Via de Cristo has a Powerpoint created for Leadership 101 and 102. Magdala referred back to the learning styles activity which stressed the importance of completing the learning cycle, especially in online learning. In-person or face-to-face activities should be paired with the online components to build relationships, model community formation, and discuss specific questions, topics or prayer concerns.

Treasurer: Steve B. distributed the profit and loss reports comparing budget and actual income and expenses for June 1 through October 20, 2011 and the balance sheet for accounts as of October 19, 2011. His activities have included preparing the reports, communicating with local secretariats concerning financial questions and dues structure, and working with Diane Purcell on financial and legal documents. He is writing a newsletter article explaining the new dues structure. Steve B. and Diane will be working on the Financial Advisor job description for the 2012 NLSAM.

He concurred with board discussion of a possible additional board meeting during the year between annual meetings but reminded us that we need to stay within the approved budget. Proposals on options for funding an additional meeting may be made in July at the annual meeting. He also raised the idea of preparing succession plans for the various board positions.

He is researching whether the board needs any type of insurance and what premiums would be charged as well as clarifying eligibility for Host Committees to receive Thrivent funds.

In January, Steve B. will be contacting the local secretariats regarding dues, so Magdala will send out the information survey January 1, 2012, to ensure that the database is updated. Steve B. also continues to pray daily for the NLS board and the movement.

Secretary: Magdala has contacted those secretariats which were unable to attend the 2011 NLSAM and mailed them materials and palanca posters. She is learning her board duties and responsibilities in taking notes and sending them out for board approval.

Before the board adjourned to dinner, we decided to move the agenda item of the Executive Director's job description and priorities to the Saturday meeting in order to concentrate on using the time after dinner for brainstorming about the speakers, forums and seminars which will be offered at the 2012 NLSAM. Pr. Doug led us in prayer before the meal.

The meeting resumed with the brainstorming session focused on the fact that 2012 is the 40th anniversary of the first Lutheran weekend held in the United States. This milestone lends itself to reaffirmation of what it means to be a "Lutheran" movement and why such a version of the cursillo movement was created. Various suggestions were made concerning speakers, presentation formats, and topics. The group agreed that we must once again emphasize The Essentials, model the three day weekend, and provide adequate opportunities for all participants to attend a variety of forums and seminars. Carolyn directed our attention to the major themes emerging from the 2011 NLSAM evaluations: more time for rest and spiritual reflection, more purposefully directed small group sessions with prayer and sharing, more information on law and finance, more ideas on encouraging pastoral support and involvement, and more sessions in which best practices are described and demonstrated. The board included in the discussion the need to provide more complete session descriptions in the pre-conference registration materials.

As we reflected on the 2011 NLSAM and prepared for the Saturday meeting with the 2012 Host Committee, Pr. Doug shared with us a quote by Dag Hammerskjold:

For whatever has been, "Thanks!" For whatever will be, "Yes!"

This reminded us Thessalonians 5:18: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

The meeting adjourned for the night at approximately 9:30pm.

Saturday, October 22, 2011

After a 9AM tour of the Regis University campus, the site of the 2012 NLSAM, the board and the Host Committee met in a conference room on campus. Present were the board members – Ed Broestl, Carolyn Hawkins, Steve Barnett, Steve Giolda, Magdala Ray, Pastor Doug Givan, and Nancy Peterson – and the Host Committee – Carol McGill (Chair), Bud and Shelly Blazier (Hospitality), Diane Broestl (Public Relations), Paul Bunker (Transportation), Loretta Hartten (Registration), Mark Karns (Communications), and Roberta Wentworth (Fundraising).

Pr. Doug opened the meeting with devotions and prayer. Carolyn provided the HC members with some specific updates and general pointers about conducting the NLSAM. She verified for the HC that the keynote address and all forums and seminars will be recorded. Each member of the HC provided a brief progress report. Carolyn then conducted a team building exercise outside for the board and the HC, and she encouraged the HC to open all their meetings with prayer, devotions and similar team building activities.

The HC and board members enjoyed a working lunch in the campus cafeteria, where the NLSAM meals will be served. Carolyn assigned all the meeting participants to specific tables for discussion and Q&A regarding the weekend in July. At the conclusion of the lunch meeting, the joint HC and board portion was adjourned.

The board returned to the Regis conference room to continue mid-year business, including reviewing the cost of the NLSAM and determining the registration fee for 2012. The 2011 NLSAM had an unusual number of delegates and visitors who were unable to attend for family and medical reasons; refunds have been mailed to those individuals. The final decision of the board was that registration for the 2012 NLSAM will be \$190/person before May 1st; registrations received after May 1st will be charged \$210/person. The first invitations will be sent mid-January.

Ed next led a discussion on the role and duties of our new Executive Director, Nancy Peterson. All board members, including Nancy, offered their perspectives on how the ED could work with and support the board functions by establishing contacts, building relationships and maintaining communication with all affiliated secretariats of the NLS. This will be the first priority of the ED, who is now the focal point for questions from those secretariats to the NLSEB. Nancy's second priority will be to work with the board in determining the best strategy for maintaining and updating the NLS database. Her third priority will be to contact the executive directors of other 4th Day movements to learn and share best practices in adhering to The Essentials in their communities.

The next agenda topic was the purpose of the NLS web site, which we agreed was first and foremost to inform and equip people within Via de Cristo and secondly to inform the outside world about this particular 4th Day movement. In keeping with that purpose, it was agreed that the web site should include all board members' contact information, such as email addresses and

phone numbers. In regard to the hosting and domain subscription, Steve G. moved that the NLS retain our current provider and transfer the site from the current server to a Linux server with the current provider. 2nd: Steve B. After a brief discussion, the board approved the motion unanimously. In response to a request from Rick Hanzlik, web site coordinator, Nancy moved that the board give Rick's church permission to use the NLS logo in the church bulletin in order to promote Via de Cristo. 2nd: Carolyn. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pr. Doug discussed with the board the deep concern of several former NLS SDs concerning the need to encourage more pastors to attend weekends, serve as SDs on Via de Cristo weekends, and participate in community activities. He will be forming a task force to develop actions to address this concern.

The board next discussed the 2012 NLSAM business meeting and reviewed the seminar and forum offerings. Three board positions will be open for nominations – VP – Administration, Treasurer, and Spiritual Director. The nominating committee must be formed by January 1, 2012. Information about the nominating process will be included in monthly emails to the LDs, in Conexiones articles, and on the NLS web site. Ed assigned board members to contact prospective speakers and presenters. Possible seminars include learning styles (Magdala), law and finance (Diane), engaging clergy in the movement (?), and using survey data about best practices (?). Possible forums include The Essentials (Greg Engroff or Victor Lugo), What Does It Mean to Be a Lutheran? (Pr. Paul Schmidlin), Strengthening the 4th Day (Pr. Neil Arnold). Pr. Joe Nilsen was suggested as a keynote speaker sharing the history of NLS Via de Cristo.

The reprinting of the 4th Day Manual (given to pilgrims by about half of the secretariats) was discussed. Ed and Magdala will review the document for the December NLSEB teleconference. Ed send the document to the board October 3rd. The revising and reissuing of DVDs was also discussed. Steve G. suggested that we refocus a DVD on “Living Your Fourth Day” by having two major sections: “Jesus and Me” and “Jesus, Community and Me.”

Judy has asked us to submit newsletter items by November 1st. This upcoming newsletter will contain the approved October minutes. The next newsletter in January will have the mid-year minutes. In response to a question, Steve G. confirmed that Diane has a document explaining 501c3 procedures that is sent to groups interested in starting a new secretariat. Steve B. informed the board of a Thrivent request by Roberta Wentworth to make a ten minute presentation at the 2012 NLSAM Saturday evening dinner. As a major sponsor of the NLSAM, Thrivent will also have a column on the registration check-in roster for participants to indicate whether they are Thrivent members.

The last topic of the afternoon board meeting was “continuity.” In and through the roles of the appointed and elected positions, how does the NLS develop and maintain continuity? The new position of Executive Director(ED) focuses on long term continuity in the board and the community. The role of the elected board members is to fulfill the constitution and bylaws, and

the role of the appointed board members is to support the elected board members. The evaluation of the ED will take place at the end of January (90 days), and the next evaluation will be at the end of July.

At 6:00PM, the board enjoyed dinner and hospitality at the home of Pr. Steve and Loretta Hartten. The board returned to the hotel and resumed meeting from 8:30PM to 9:30PM for a visioning session.

Ed began the visioning session by asking how we as the NLSEB can do what we are doing better. In our constitution and bylaws, we are charged with supporting, strengthening, guiding and assisting the affiliated secretariats; coordinating the flow of information and resources among them; encouraging the use of liturgy and rollo outlines in keeping with general Lutheran practice; and expanding the Via de Cristo movement. Since our first charges include support and strengthening, that must be our first objective as a board and the first priority of the ED. This requires an assessment of needs and the building of relationships among the ED, board and community. We want to be sure that every local secretariat sees us and uses us as a valuable resource for following The Essentials, as Steve G stated our goal. The NLS must be seen as a source of solutions but not the problem solvers. When we distributed the Wellness Checklist, many secretariats realized that weekends were being held for the wrong reasons. The goal of the weekend must always be to create and strengthen strong Christian communities which encourage, support and emphasize the formation of reunion groups and which hold regular Ultreyas. One of the ways this is accomplished is by conducting retreat weekends which follow the Via de Cristo method: The Essentials.

The board then moved into a discussion of envisioning how the NLSAM can support and strengthen the affiliated secretariats, agreeing that one of the best ways of doing that at the annual meeting is by conducting the meeting as a model of the retreat weekend. Therefore, more time for reflection, discussion and application is needed. After every speaker, seminar or forum, participants must be given the opportunity to reflect on the “big idea” they found within the presentation. Participants should be able to answer for themselves why their communities need this information, what the first action step would be in their communities, how their communities can implement this idea, whom in each community needs to be told about it, who needs to start the action step, and what the possibilities could be within their communities. In modeling the weekend, the presentations (forums and/or seminars) could be kept at approximately 30 minutes, leaving perhaps ten minutes for personal reflection and finalizing notes, and then 15 minutes for small group discussion.

The board adjourned for the evening and reconvened in the morning for worship and communion and breakfast. Having shared special Bible verses in our lives, we officially ended the mid-year meeting with prayer at 9:00AM.